

## **South Carolina AHEC Rural Dentist Program Fact Sheet**

### **Overview:**

The Rural Dentist Program, in coordination with the Department of Health and Environmental Control's Public Health Dentistry Program, is established at the Medical University of South Carolina. The funds appropriated to the Medical University of South Carolina for the Rural Dentist Program shall be administered by the South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium. The Medical University of South Carolina is responsible for the fiscal management of funds to ensure that state policies and guidelines are adhered to.

### **Board:**

While this program is administered by South Carolina AHEC, a Board is created to manage and allocate these funds to ensure the location of licensed dentists in rural areas of South Carolina and on the faculty of the College of Dental Medicine at MUSC. The Board will be composed of the following: The Dean, or his Designee, of the MUSC College of Dental Medicine; three members from the South Carolina Dental Education Foundation Board who represent rural areas; and the President, or his designee, of the South Carolina Dental Association. The Director of DHEC's Office of Primary Care; the Director or his designee of the Department of Health and Human Services; and the Executive Director of the South Carolina Dental Association shall serve as ex-officio members without vote.

### **Priority:**

The intent of this program is to assist dentists in repaying educational loans in order that they may practice in a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) in South Carolina or serve as full-time faculty at the MUSC College of Dental Medicine, without the financial burden of unpaid educational loans. The Board expects that during the commitment period, the dentists will either establish viable practices and become involved in their communities so that they will continue practicing in the area after the funding period is over, or will establish viable academic careers at the College of Dental Medicine. Priority for this program will be given to those demonstrating need and expressing honest intent to remain in the underserved area once funding is completed or are in an area of critical need at the College of Dental Medicine.

### **Eligibility:**

To be eligible for the program, all applicants must have no outstanding service obligation for health professional service to the Federal Government (e.g., an active military obligation or National Health Service Corp), a State (e.g. State Loan Repayment Program or Scholarship Program obligation) or other entity, unless the obligation would be completed prior to receipt of the dental loan repayment award. All applicants must be a U.S. citizen (either U.S. born or naturalized), U.S. national or a Lawful Permanent Resident, and must provide documentation of their status. A Lawful Permanent Resident is also known as a "Permanent Resident Alien," "Resident Alien Permit Holder," or "Green Card Holder."

## Application Process:

For the funding period of July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023: Applications will be accepted until February 15, 2022, and considered by the Board shortly thereafter. No late applications will be accepted. Applicants must identify the community in South Carolina in which they wish to practice or are currently practicing. Applications will also be accepted from dentists who wish to serve on the faculty at the MUSC College of Dental Medicine.

## Required Documentation:

- Proof of U.S. citizenship, U.S. National, or Lawful Permanent Resident status (U.S. birth certificate issued by a city, county or state agency of the United States, identification page of an unexpired U.S. passport, or a Certificate of Citizenship, a Naturalization Certificate, or a Green Card). Please note that a state driver's license or state-issued non-driver's identification, Residence Card, or Social Security Card are not acceptable proof of U.S. citizenship or status as a U.S. national.
- A personal statement
- Curriculum vitae
- Minimum of three current signed community letters of support from lay members (not dentists) of the community\*
- Copies of all educational loan documents
- Documentation of practice investment from the dentist or other organization or entities\*
- 1040 Form from the most recent tax return with social security number redacted
- Copy of the SLED State Criminal Records Check. Available at <https://catch.sled.sc.gov/>. (There is a minimal charge for this check.) \*

\*Not required for MUSC Dental Faculty Applicants

Applications from providers currently in practice must include an **individual** Medicaid provider number in order to be considered. This stipulation does not apply to students who have not yet completed their training who will need to obtain an individual Medicaid provider number to be eligible for loan repayment. For students who will establish practice upon completion of training, to become a Medicaid provider, access the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) website at <https://www.scdhhs.gov/>. The South Carolina Dental Association (SCDA) can assist with obtaining a Medicaid provider number.

## Contract:

**Community Dentists:** Accepted community dentists will sign a contract with South Carolina AHEC and MUSC to practice in an underserved area for four years. The current contract amount is up to \$75,000 total paid quarterly. The terms of the contract stipulate that all participants will be expected to treat at least 100 unduplicated Medicaid patients in South Carolina each year of the contract.

**MUSC Faculty:** Accepted faculty at the MUSC College of Dental Medicine will sign a contract with South Carolina AHEC and MUSC to receive funding for one year. The contract amount varies and is paid annually.

**Penalty for Default:**

If the dentist fails to execute the full terms of the contract, the Board will determine the appropriate disposition. The penalty may be up to a triple repayment of all money received plus interest at the prime rate plus 10% as of the day of default (plus any legal fees and costs necessary to collect the money). In the case of pregnancy, extended leave during which the dentist does not serve as a full-time dentist or special circumstances, a period of time equal to the extended leave shall be added to the contract period.

**Contact Information:**

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